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Concerning Raised Bill 364 AN ACT CONCERNING TRAFFIC STOP
INFORMATION.

I am a 53-year-old white woman and college professor. I would like to support revisions to the state's Penn Act that make reporting of all traffic stops mandatory, but I want to see these strengthened by the Community Party's proposed language. In the past couple of years, I have been stopped by a police officer, once for speeding and once for not having a license plate on my front bumper. In both instances the officers were polite, and in neither instance did they write a citation. I was given a written warning in the case of the speeding incident and a verbal warning in the case of the license plate.

Too often we hear only of the instances in which people of color have been profiled, but profiling works both ways. It results in people of color getting stopped and cited, while white people are treated differently. In the first case I did get a record of the stop, because the officer issued a formal warning. In the second case, there is no record of that stop. There are number of reasons that failure to have records of stops is problematic. What happens during a stop should be a matter of public record. We all have a stake in the laws being applied fairly, uniformly, and properly. It's easy for a person who escapes the penalties of a speedy ticket to be happy; I certainly was. But I am also aware that my age, color and apparent class status probably resulted in less harsh treatment than I would have received were I of a different color and less visibly middle class.

Every single time profiling happens that people of color are unfairly stopped and white people are intentionally not stopped or are let off, we undermine our society's principles of fairness, equity and equality. Every time it happens and we don't record it, we leave citizens unable to challenge the status quo and we make them voiceless. The integrity of police departments is undermined and people stop believing that our society is one under the rule of law. Justice demands that profiling never take place, with regard to anyone's race or ethnicity or perceived statuses (religion, class, gender identity and sexual orientation).

Thank you for your consideration